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From: Kaiser, Steven [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=10BF2440EDD749D2845015C7AB59FF4B-SKAISE02]
Sent: 3/30/2017 5:01:45 PM
To: Carla Morgan [cmorgan@eastchicago.com]; McCoy, Lisa [LMcCoy@idem.IN.gov]
CC: Garypie, Catherine [garypie.catherine@epa.gov]; Toney, Marcy [toney.marcy@epa.gov]; Kyte, Larry [kyte.larry@epa.gov]; Leverett Nelson [Nelson.Leverett@epa.gov]
Subject: USS Lead - Press

East Chicago press clips**US EPA Region 5 – prepared by the Office of Public Affairs****March 30, 2017**

Chicago Tribune **Grievance process could temporarily stay relocation of West Calumet residents**
NWI Times **IURC expected to decide soon on East Chicago water rates**
Senate panel scraps mandate for East Chicago soil testing

WYFI **East Chicago Residents Lament Impacts Of Friday Moving Deadline**

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/news/ct-ptb-east-chicago-transfer-update-st-0330-20170329-story.html>

Grievance process could temporarily stay relocation of West Calumet residents**Craig Lyons** Post-Tribune

As East Chicago housing officials still plan to start the emergency relocation of residents of the West Calumet Housing Complex next month, the grievance process could provide some a temporary stay.

The [East Chicago Housing Authority](#) Wednesday held a meeting for the complex's residents to update them on the impending emergency transfers and provided information on how to appeal the temporary relocation, which could help residents, who want to avoid moving to Illinois, stay in Indiana.

Emily Coffey, a staff attorney with the Shriver Center which is representing the residents, said if people are unhappy with the units they've been assigned, they can file a grievance but there's little information on how that process will work.

"It's not clear right now," Coffey said, but residents will not have to relocate until that process is over.

The grievance process will start once residents have filed with the housing authority, according to a HUD official, and be conducted by hearing officers from Chicago and Gary.

Tia Cauley, executive director of the East Chicago Housing Authority, declined to comment.

While residents got more information on filing a grievance, they heard few new details from housing officials.

"Everything is still the same," said West Calumet resident Demetra Turner.

At the end of March, HUD gave its approval for the East Chicago Housing Authority to begin emergency relocation of the remaining families because of the high levels of lead and arsenic contamination at the complex, which is within the USS Lead Superfund site.

The approval would give the East Chicago Housing Authority the ability to transfer West Calumet residents to other properties in East Chicago, Chicago and suburban Cook County, starting April 1, according to HUD officials.

HUD said the East Chicago Housing Authority will begin moving residents to their new units after March 31. Contractors will move people's belongings the week of April 3.

If families must temporarily relocate to Illinois, HUD said the East Chicago Housing Authority will provide free transportation so children can stay in their current schools.

"It's nothing binding that they have to do this," Turner said.

HUD officials said the East Chicago Housing Authority has committed to provide transportation but has not seen a plan in writing.

Residents and community groups protested the emergency relocations on Friday, asking housing authority and city officials to push back a deadline for people to move out until the end of the school year. Prior to the protests outside

city hall and the housing authority office, Mayor Anthony Copeland said it's necessary to move people out of the complex to protect the health and safety of residents and the whole community.

"Waiting is not a feasible option because each day that passes results in a delay in our ability to make the changes needed to improve the neighborhood and to remove any environmental hazards," Copeland said in a statement. HUD said 60 families received emergency transfer notices, with 30 families getting units in East Chicago and others in Illinois.

Since those notices went out, the 13 families slated to be transferred to Illinois could likely get a unit in East Chicago as other residents find permanent housing. Eight of those 13 will get a temporary unit elsewhere in East Chicago, according to HUD, but the remaining five might have to take a short-term unit in Illinois unless others open up.

"HUD's desire is that these families do not have to cross state lines if at all possible, but it will ultimately depend on how many units are available in East Chicago and how many families still remain onsite as we move closer to March 31," HUD said in a statement.

The number of residents who could be temporarily relocated is still in flux, HUD said, and the agencies are working to minimize the number of residents who might temporarily move to Illinois but want to stay in Indiana.

Many residents at West Calumet are still in the process of finding housing that won't necessitate the temporary relocation.

Resident Angela Thornton said she's waiting on a possible home in Hammond but isn't sure if the paperwork will get processed before the emergency transfers begin. She said she'd likely stay with family to avoid the transfer and keep her daughter in school as opposed to moving to south Chicago.

"I can't do it, and I'm not going to," Thornton said.

Resident Akeeshea Daniels said she's in the process of securing a new home elsewhere in the Calumet neighborhood and is just waiting for an inspection and the paperwork to go through.

"I see a little glimmer of light," Daniels said.

clvons@post-trib.com

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/iurc-expected-to-decide-soon-on-east-chicago-water-rates/article_54c6f0f3-0c58-5dd2-b979-47e4b264e5d9.html

IURC expected to decide soon on East Chicago water rates

- [Sarah Reese sarah.reese@nwi.com, 219-933-3351](mailto:sarah.reese@nwi.com)
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- Mar 29, 2017 Updated 18 hrs ago East Chicago and the Office of Utility Consumer Counselor are urging the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission to reject objections to a 55 percent across-the-board increase in the city's water rates by 12 industrial customers and approve a settlement reached in December.

Attorneys for the industrial group recently filed a proposed order seeking to hold rates for customers using more than 1 million gallons per month at current levels. The group includes some of the city's largest companies, including ArcelorMittal, U.S. Steel Corp., USG Corp. and Praxair.

The record in the case has been closed, and "an order will be issued in due course," a spokeswoman for the IURC said. The OUCC website said the order is expected in April or May.

Under the agreement between East Chicago and the OUCC, the monthly water bill for a residential customer using 5,000 gallons would rise from \$12.05 to \$18.66. East Chicago also would be authorized to issue up to \$18 million in long-term debt.

The settlement was announced in December, shortly after the city informed residents the Environmental Protection Agency discovered elevated lead levels in drinking water at 18 of 43 homes testing within the USS Lead Superfund site. Up to 90 percent of East Chicago's water service lines could be lead, and EPA has recommended all residents use certified water filters.

A group of residents in January wrote a letter objecting to the settlement, because money to replace lead service lines was eliminated from the city's initial plan.

A spokesman for the OUCC said last week its efforts have helped result in a better solution for lead line replacements than what the city initially proposed.

"In its original filing, the city proposed the use of ratepayer funding for a program that would have funded 50 percent of the costs to replace up to 500 customer-owned lead service lines," OUCC spokesman Anthony Swinger said in an email.

"The remaining 50 percent of the costs would have been each property owner's responsibility. The city estimated, in all, that approximately 4,000 customer-owned service lines need to be replaced."

The OUCC supports the city's efforts to replace lead service lines, but "raised concerns in testimony about the long-standing regulatory principle that money collected through utility rates should only be used to pay for infrastructure that is owned by the utility and is considered to benefit all of the utility's customers," he said.

Instead, the OUCC encouraged the city to seek additional funding. A Jan. 19 addendum to the settlement says the city has secured a \$3.1 million grant from the Indiana Finance Authority.

The IFA grant "will cover the replacement of up to 500 customer-owned lead services lines at 100 percent of the costs," Swinger said.

He added, "The policy issue of whether ratepayer money should be used for customer-owned lead line replacements is being considered by the General Assembly in House Bill 1519."

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/senate-panel-scrap-mandate-for-east-chicago-soil-testing/article_3802aa3f-1bc3-585a-a3b2-17bb231cd8d1.html

2017 Indiana General Assembly

Senate panel scraps mandate for East Chicago soil testing

- [Dan Carden dan.carden@nwi.com, 317-637-9078](mailto:dan.carden@nwi.com)

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- Mar 29, 2017 Updated 12 hrs ago Bottom of Form

INDIANAPOLIS — A House-approved plan for extensive water and soil testing throughout East Chicago was rewritten Wednesday by a Senate committee to focus testing on the city's water.

House Bill 1344 now would require the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to annually test East Chicago's water supply to confirm it complies with federal lead and copper limits for drinking water.

Previously the legislation would have mandated multiple state agencies regularly test for lead and arsenic in soil throughout the city, in addition to annual water testing.

State Rep. Earl Harris, Jr., D-East Chicago, said the cost of unlimited citywide soil testing, pegged at \$50 per metal per sample, prompted senators to revise that part of his proposal.

The measure still designates East Chicago neighborhoods contaminated by past lead manufacturing operations as "areas of special concern," in which state agencies are expected to work closely with their federal counterparts to relocate residents and remove or remediate tainted soil.

The full Senate is likely to vote next week on the revised legislation.

If the changes are accepted by the House, it then will go to Gov. Eric Holcomb for his signature or veto.

If not, lawmakers from both chambers will meet to work out a compromise final version of the proposal.

<http://www.wfyi.org/news/articles/east-chicago-residents-lament-impacts-of-friday-moving-deadline>

News • Public Affairs / March 29, 2017

East Chicago Residents Lament Impacts Of Friday Moving Deadline

Annie Ropeik

Friday, March 31 is the last day for families in East Chicago's lead-contaminated public housing complex to move or be moved — and despite strenuous opposition from residents and lawyers, officials say they have to enforce that deadline. Keeshea Daniels' last days at West Calumet Housing Complex haven't been easy. Last week, between apartment-hunting and driving her kids all around the state, she started feeling itchy.

"I thought I might have had an allergic reaction or something. Oh, no, I have shingles again for the fifth time since October," she says. "So I really couldn't rest while I was in Indianapolis because I knew something was brewing, but I didn't know, to this magnitude, what was going to happen to us."

A few days later, Daniels learned she might have to temporarily move to Chicago's South Side while she kept looking for permanent housing. West Calumet Housing Complex is slated for demolition, and Daniels has struggled to find affordable housing nearby. Her deadline to secure something or face relocation is Friday.

"It would have been 'no,' but I wasn't even asked — we were just told where we were going," she says. "And putting me on the South Side of Chicago is like putting a deer in the middle of Cline Avenue. You know, you don't belong there! I don't belong in Chicago, because I'm from Indiana."

Attorney Emily Coffey of the Shriver Center on Poverty Law calls the prospect “devastating.” She’s encouraging Daniels and other residents to file grievances with the city over their temporary housing assignments.

Coffey says the city shouldn’t be forcing the moves with so many families still living in the complex – at least 60 at last count.

“The federal housing officials and the local housing officials have seriously failed to consider how much this is going to harm the families at West Calumet,” Coffey says. “They’ve already been through too much.”

She argues officials haven’t done enough to help the residents find good long-term housing options.

The move-out deadline was set in a federal settlement in November. It also mandated moving cost reimbursements and special housing counselors who focus on helping residents improving their quality of life. But residents say those resources were slow to come through.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has been helping the city deal with all this, and deputy regional administrator Jim Cunningham says they’ve done their best to move quickly in an unprecedented situation.

Sincerely,

Steven P. Kaiser
Office of Regional Counsel
United States Environmental Protection Agency
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 353 - 3804